



Economic Impact of Oceano Dunes SVRA Visitors

Report Prepared for California Department of Parks and Recreation

William W. Hendricks, Ph.D.
Recreation, Parks, & Tourism Administration
Natural Resources Management
Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo

Lynn Hamilton, Ph.D.
Agribusiness
Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo

Sheridan Bohlken
Recreation, Parks, & Tourism Administration
Natural Resources Management
Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo

Amber Petit
Recreation, Parks, & Tourism Administration
Natural Resources Management
Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo

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William W. Hendricks, Ph.D.
Associate Professor & Coordinator
Recreation, Parks, & Tourism Administration Program
Natural Resources Management Department
California Polytechnic State University
San Luis Obispo, CA 93407
805-756-1246 phone
805-756-1402 fax
whendric@calpoly.edu

Lynn Hamilton, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Agribusiness Department
California Polytechnic State University

Sheridan Bohlken
Recreation, Parks, & Tourism Administration
Natural Resources Management
Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo

Amber Petit
Recreation, Parks, & Tourism Administration
Natural Resources Management
Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo

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Executive Summary

In 2007, researchers at California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo completed an economic impact study at Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area (ODSVRA). The study investigated the economic impact of visitors to ODSVRA and visitor characteristics, motivations, resource amenities, and place attachment to the Dunes.

Data were collected from visitors to the Dunes from January 2005 through December 2005 and from January 2007 through April 2007 on randomly selected days. An on-site “contact interview” was conducted with visitors, followed by a mailed questionnaire. Four hundred seven subjects returned a completed and useable questionnaire (44.92% response rate).

The individuals who completed a questionnaire were mostly male, married, had some college education, an annual household income of \$70,000 and above, and an average age of 38 years old. Most subjects were visiting the Dunes with family and friends.

The survey represented 3,640 visitors, who, on average spent \$75.68 in the Five Cities area, and an additional \$5.49 in other areas of San Luis Obispo County. The estimated annual direct economic impact by visitors to the Dunes on the Five Cities area was \$70.1 million. The direct impact on San Luis Obispo County was nearly \$76 million. These two figures are not cumulative. When indirect effects (inter-industry purchases) are considered, as well as induced effects (increased spending by local households as a result of more money circulating through the area), the total output increased to \$101.4 million.

The subjects responded to a variety of items on the questionnaire that provided a glimpse of their characteristics. The most frequent recreational activities during a visit included riding an ATV on the beach, driving on the beach, camping, and walking. Among the subjects' reasons for visiting the Dunes were to be outdoors, to be with family, to get away from daily routines, to be with others who enjoy the same things, and to use outdoor recreation equipment. Amenities indicated as important were the beach for legal OHV use, shops in Pismo Beach, restaurants in the Five Cities area, and rental shops/locations for ATVs. The subjects also expressed a high level of place attachment to the Dunes.

Economic Impact of Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area Visitors

Introduction

In 2003, a report was completed by researchers from California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo for the California Department of Parks and Recreation that presented research results from a study conducted at Morro Bay State Park. The study focused on the economic impact of overnight visitors to the park on the City of Morro Bay and San Luis Obispo County. In addition, the report provided an overview of visitor characteristics, motivations, resource amenities, and visitor place attachment to the park. Based on the usefulness of this research for local park units, the Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area (ODSVRA) Superintendent at that time, Steve Yamaichi, requested that a similar study be conducted at ODSVRA. Although Superintendent Yamaichi transferred to another state park unit, his predecessor Andrew Zilke followed up with pursuit of the research with researchers from Cal Poly.

The Dunes has been a frequent destination for motor vehicle recreational activities and ocean-based water sports for nearly a century on the California Central Coast. Nevertheless, it has been more than a decade since a comprehensive study has been conducted to estimate the economic impact of the visitors to the Dunes on the local economy. Furthermore, other essential variables that provide knowledge regarding park and recreation visitors such as their recreational activities, attachment to a place, their motivations, and the amenities that attract visitors to a destination have previously not been examined in detail at ODSVRA. Variables such as these offer further insight and understanding about why visitors do the things they do and visit the places they visit.

The purpose of this study was to determine the economic impact of visitors to the Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area on the Five Cities Area and San Luis Obispo County. A secondary purpose was to determine the local natural, cultural, and community resources that attract visitors to the park, reasons for park visitation, and the attachment that visitors have with the park. The project was a collaborative effort funded by the California Department of Parks and Recreation and the California State University Agricultural Research Initiative.

Methods

The study was conducted at the Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area located on the Central California Coast south of Pismo Beach. The Dunes is a popular recreation area with annual visitation of nearly 1.5 million visitors.

Visitors to the Dunes were contacted on randomly selected days within the ODSVRA. Random selection of times was not possible due to the necessity of collecting data during times of low tide to assist with research assistants' access to the study site. Each day of data collection, two randomly selected locations were chosen based on the poles that are located approximately 1/2 mile apart at the Dunes. The eight locations available for selection were north of pole two, and south of each pole, two through eight. Periods of data collection were divided into quarters. Data collection took place during four quarters from January through December 2005 and one quarter from January through April 2007. The latter data collection period took place due to a lower than expected response rate during the first year of data collection. Fifteen to 20 days were selected during each quarter for contacts with visitors at the Dunes. Managers at the Dunes estimated visitor use patterns of 90% weekend use from post-Labor Day until Memorial Day weekend, and 50% weekend use between Memorial Day and Labor Day. The proportion of weekend and weekdays for contacts was based on these estimates.

On-site interviews were conducted using a modified Dillman (2000) technique which entailed a contact to obtain a name and address for a subsequent mailed survey and basic visitor information including date, type of OHVs, and location of the contact (Appendix A).

Following the contacts, the subjects were sent a 7-page questionnaire (Appendix B), a business reply return envelope, and a cover letter (Appendix C). A cover page introduced the survey by stating the general purpose of the study and providing information about incentives. Two incentives were offered to the subjects. Subjects who returned their questionnaire within 7 days were mailed a complimentary single day-use pass. In addition, all subjects who returned a questionnaire were eligible for a drawing to win an annual OHV day-use pass and two nights camping at ODSVRA for up to four vehicles. Approximately one week after the first mailing, the subjects were sent a postcard (Appendix D) emphasizing the importance of participation in the survey and thanking them if they had already returned a questionnaire. The first mailed questionnaire was followed with a second mailing to non-respondents with a slightly different cover letter (Appendix E) approximately three weeks later.

The survey provided a comprehensive view of the visitors to the Dunes. Visitor characteristics measured included group size and composition, gender, marital status, age, education level, and annual household income. Other information regarding visitor patterns consisted of the type of visit (overnight or day-use), the type of overnight camping, nights stayed in the park, principal residence, distance and time traveled to the Dunes, visitation patterns outside of the Dunes and partaking of recreational activities at the Dunes and in San Luis Obispo County. Other variables examined were the importance of various reasons for visiting the Dunes, amenities important to the visitors, and place attachment to the Dunes. Expenditures were analyzed for the Five Cities area (Pismo Beach, Arroyo Grande, Oceano, Grover Beach, and Shell Beach) and in other areas of San Luis Obispo County. Eight expenditure categories recommended by

Crompton (1999) were analyzed including lodging expenses, camping/day-use fees, food and beverage, private auto expenses, retail shopping, recreation activities, and other expenses.

Economic data were collected and analyzed at the zip code level for the Five Cities area and San Luis Obispo County using IMPLAN which is based on multiplier effects and direct, indirect, and induced effects due to economic impact in an area. As a component of IMPLAN, state park personnel provided expenditures incurred by the park unit in the local communities.

Data analysis was conducted to provide a clear representation of visitors to the Dunes. Descriptive statistics were analyzed regarding visitor characteristics, visitor patterns, reasons for visits, amenity resources, and place attachment to the Dunes. Furthermore, the questionnaire concluded with a statement “please share with us other comments regarding your visit to Oceano Dunes SVRA.” Comments from this item were categorized based on the themes that were identified from these qualitative data responses.

Results

Subject Characteristics

Contact interviews at the Dunes resulted in 407 subjects returning usable questionnaires from 933 contacts with visitors. Twenty-seven subjects had undeliverable addresses resulting in a return rate of 44.92% and a sample size of 906 subjects. Most subjects were male (61.8%), married (70.0%) and approximately 38 years old. The age range was 17 to 78 years old. Subjects were usually visiting the park with family and friends (69.9%) or family (17.3%) (Table 1). The average group size was 9 individuals. Nearly 50% of the subjects had completed some college education (Table 2). The most frequently indicated annual household was \$100,000 or greater (31.4%) (Table 3). Approximately 40% of the subjects had an annual household income below \$70,000.

Table 1
Group Composition

<u>Group</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Cumulative %</u>
Family & friends	283	69.9%	69.9%
Family	70	17.3	87.2
Friends	41	10.1	97.3
Club/organization	6	1.5	98.8
Self	1	0.2	99.0
School/study group	1	0.2	99.2
Other	3	0.7	99.0

Note. n=405, less than 100% total due to rounding

Visitation patterns focused on the type of visit to the Dunes, aspects of the trip within San Luis Obispo County, and other travel characteristics. The majority of subjects (n=276, 68.3%) were overnight campers. Most subjects were camping with a tent

(35.4%) or a trailer/5th wheel (18.7%) (Table 4). The subjects stayed an average of about 2 1/2 nights at the Dunes with a range of 1 to 15 nights reported. They resided approximately 200 miles away with a maximum distance of 3,000 miles and they took about 3 1/2 hours to get to the Dunes from their principal residence. Visitors also reported their county residence (Table 5). Most visitors were from Fresno County (13.1%), Tulare County (9.0%), Kern County (8.8%), and Los Angeles County (8.3%). During their visit to San Luis Obispo County, 95 subjects (23.4%) stayed overnight in another location within the county. These individuals stayed in a hotel/motel/bed & breakfast (n=44, 46.3%), in another campground (n=24, 25.3%), or with friends/family (n=26, 27.4%). One individual indicated “other” for a response. See Figure 1 for additional details. On average, these visitors stayed 2.64 nights in San Luis Obispo County other than those nights spent at ODSVRA.

Table 2
Highest Education Level

Education	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative %
Completed graduate degree	26	6.5%	6.5%
Some graduate work	16	4.0	10.4
Completed 4 year college degree	85	21.1	31.6
Some college	194	48.3	79.9
Completed high school	71	17.7	97.5
Some high school	6	1.5	99.0
Completed grade school	4	1.0	100.00

Note. n=402

A series of questions addressed the subjects’ travel patterns relative to their visit to the Dunes. They were asked if they were only visiting the Dunes or other destinations and if the Dunes were not in existence would they still visit the Five Cities area and San

Luis Obispo County. A majority of the subjects indicated that Oceano Dunes SVRA was the only destination for the trip (83.8%) (Figure 2). More than 50% of the subjects would not visit the Five Cities area and more than 40% would not visit San Luis Obispo County if the Dunes was not in existence during their visit (Table 6).

Table 3
Annual Household Income

Income	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative %
\$100,000 or greater	122	31.4%	31.4%
\$90,000-99,999	29	7.5	38.8
\$80,000-89,999	38	9.8	48.6
\$70,000-79,999	42	10.8	59.4
\$60,000-69,999	49	12.6	72.0
\$50,000-59,999	40	10.3	82.3
\$40,000-49,999	21	5.4	87.7
\$30,000-39,999	23	5.9	93.6
\$20,000-29,999	13	3.3	96.9
\$10,000-19,999	5	1.3	98.2
Less than \$10,000	7	1.8	100.0

Note. n=389

Table 4
Overnight Camping

Camping Type	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative %
Tent camping	144	48.5%	48.5%
Trailer/5 th wheel	76	25.6	74.1
Recreational vehicle	55	18.5	92.6
Truck camper	17	5.7	98.3
Multiple	5	1.7	100.0

Note. n=297

Table 5
Location of Principal Residence

<u>Location</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Fresno County	52	13.1%
Tulare County	36	9.0
Kern County	35	8.8
Los Angeles County	33	8.3
San Luis Obispo County	27	6.8
Santa Barbara County	24	6.0
Santa Clara County	22	5.5
Ventura County	19	4.8
Stanislaus County	18	4.5
Kings County	17	4.3
Sacramento County	14	3.5
San Diego County	10	2.5
San Bernardino County	9	2.3
Merced County	8	2.0
San Joaquin County	8	2.0
Madera County	7	1.8
Orange County	7	1.8
Tuolumne County	5	1.3
Nevada County	5	1.3
Alameda County	4	1.0
Monterey County	4	1.0
Yolo County	4	1.0
<u>Santa Cruz County</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>1.0</u>

Note. Only locations with at least 4 subjects are reported. Four out-of-state subjects were recorded from Arizona, Nevada, Massachusetts, and New York.

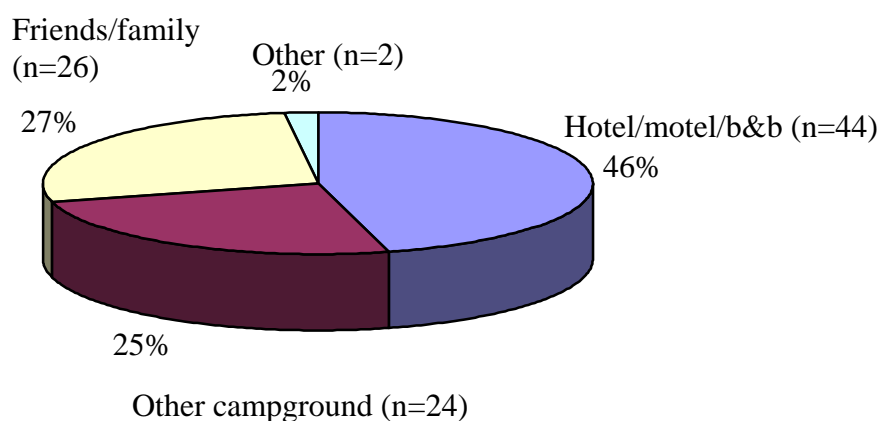


Figure 1. Other San Luis Obispo County overnight locations

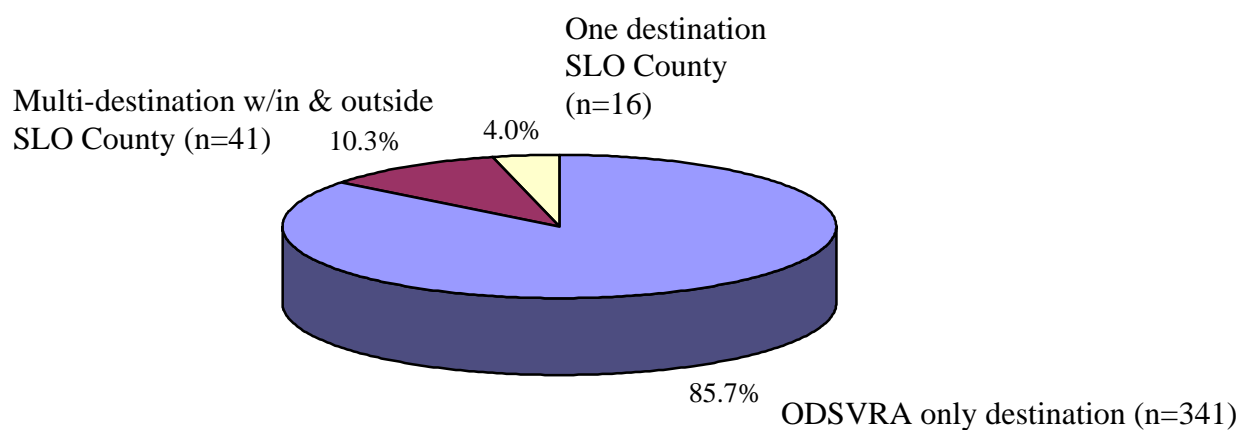


Figure 2. Destinations during visit

Table 6

Visit Five Cities and SLO County if OSDVRA not in Existence

Still Visit	Five Cities Area		San Luis Obispo County	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	123	30.4%	151	37.7%
No	215	53.2	176	43.9
Uncertain	66	16.3	74	18.5

Recreational Activities

Participation in recreational activities during the visit to the Dunes and San Luis Obispo County by the subjects' group was also of interest. Subjects checked all relevant activities from a list of 43 activities and an other category (Table 7). One choice, Junior ranger program was not selected by any subjects. Activities selected most frequently were ATV riding on beach (88.1%), driving on beach (67.6%), camping (65.7%), walking (64.9%), driving for pleasure on beach (64.6%) eating at restaurants in Five Cities area (56.0%), and motorcycle riding on beach (53.7%). Activities with few participants included canoeing (0.2%), sailing (0.7%), wind surfing (0.7%), and naturalist-led activities (0.7%)

Economic Impact

To assess the impact of visitor spending, eight categories recommended by Crompton (1999) were analyzed including lodging expenses, camping fees at ODSVRA, camping fees at other public campgrounds, food and beverage, auto expenses, shopping, recreational activities, and other expenses. The data were collected and analyzed at the zip code level for the Five Cities area, which includes Shell Beach, Pismo Beach, Oceano, Arroyo Grande and Grover Beach; and San Luis Obispo County using IMPLAN. IMPLAN is an economic analysis tool that allows one to trace the impact of dollars spent in a particular area, and how new spending affects the overall economy in terms of increased demand for goods and services, employment, and the total value added to the area of study.

Total expenditures per group are presented in Table 8. The subjects spent more money in the Five Cities area than in San Luis Obispo County for all expenditure

Table 7
Recreational Activities During Visit to ODSVRA

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
ATV riding on beach	357	88.1%
Driving on the beach	275	67.6
Camping	266	65.7
Walking	263	64.9
Driving for pleasure on beach	261	64.6
Eating at Five Cities restaurant(s)	227	56.0
Motorcycle riding on beach	217	53.7
Picnic	197	48.6
Sunbathing at beach	181	44.7
Swimming/wading in ocean	174	43.0
Photography	173	42.7
Sightseeing	161	39.8
Sand railing	150	37.0
Shopping in Five Cities area	145	35.8
Walking dog	138	34.1
Beachcombing	130	32.1
Driving for pleasure on highway	124	30.6
Wild /marine life viewing	91	22.4
Jogging/running	87	21.5
Hiking	80	19.8
Boogie boarding	71	17.5
Nature exploration	61	15.0
Ocean fishing	59	14.6
Exploring tidepools	50	12.3
Dunes tour	50	12.3
Bird watching	47	11.5
Surfing	45	11.1
Clam digging	43	10.6
Wine tasting	33	8.1
Other activities	32	7.9
Golf	29	7.2
Jet skiing	27	6.7
Road biking	23	5.7
Horseback riding	22	5.4
Mountain biking	20	4.9
Kayaking	11	2.7
Scuba/snorkel	9	2.2
Kite boarding	7	1.7
Naturalist-led activities	3	0.7
Wind surfing	3	0.7
Sailing	3	0.7
Canoeing	1	0.2

categories. The highest expenditure categories in the Five Cities area for per group spending were food and beverage at restaurants, concessions, and bars (\$70,269), private auto expenses including gas, oil, repairs, parking fees and public transportation (\$66,719), and retail shopping which incorporated souvenirs, gifts, film, bait, supplies, groceries, etc. (\$47,177).

Table 8
Expenditures per Group

Expenditures	Five Cities Total per Category	San Luis Obispo County Total per Category
Lodging (hotel/motel/private campgrounds)	\$40,523	\$7,250
ODSVRA camping fees	22,201	
Camping fees other public campgrounds	6,615	55
Food & beverage (restaurants, concessions, bars)	70,269	5,875
Private auto expenses	66,719	3,661
Retail shopping	47,177	2,785
Recreation activities	23,146	66
Other expenses	19,033	275
<u>Total expenditures</u>	<u>\$297,682</u>	<u>\$19,967</u>

Average expenditures per visitor were calculated for camping fees, other lodging, food and beverage, auto expenses, shopping, recreational activities, and miscellaneous expenses. The survey represented 3,640 visitors, who each spent an average of \$75.68 in the Five Cities area, and an additional \$5.49 in other areas of San Luis Obispo County. These figures, which do not include the average of \$6.10 per visitor spent for ODSVRA campground fees, were imported to IMPLAN to estimate the visitors' overall economic

impact on the area, using a zip-code level economic database. ODSVRA officials provided park attendance data. For the years 2005-2006, the average park attendance for campers and those registered for day-use vehicle permits was 1,460,293 visitors. The survey sample indicated that 6.5 percent of the visitors were from San Luis Obispo County, so the camping and day-use attendance figure was reduced by that percentage. The reason for doing so is that the true economic impact comes from visitor dollars brought into area. The IMPLAN database already takes into account local economic activity between sectors of the economy; including local resident expenditures who were Dunes visitors would essentially consider this impact twice.

In 2005 and 2006, an additional of 562,578 people (on average) annually were admitted as free, non-vehicle day users of ODSVRA. This number, in addition to the camping and vehicle users, brings the average annual attendance to just below 2 million. However, the free, non-vehicle day users of the park were not incorporated into the economic element of the study, because a unique feature of ODSRVA is that it allows beach and dune access for off-road vehicles. Presumably, if vehicles were not allowed on the dunes and beach areas, these 560,000-plus people would still visit ODSVRA. Therefore, in order to avoid overestimation of the economic impact from the off-road attraction of the Dunes, these visitors are not included in the analysis.

The direct impact to the Five Cities area is estimated to be \$70.1 million annually in total output, which measures the increased demand for products in the area as a result of visitors' expenditures. The primary industries affected are restaurants, retail shops, the lodging industry, recreational businesses, and gasoline stations. When indirect effects (inter-industry purchases) are considered, as well as induced effects (increased spending

by local households as a result of more money circulating through the area), the total output increased to \$101.4 million. The figures reported are in 2006 dollars.

The value-added impacts, which measure the change in labor and proprietor income, as well as property income and business taxes, were \$61.8 million in direct, indirect, and induced effects. One of the reasons that the value-added impacts are lower in this case is that the Five Cities area is small, with only 183 industries of the 512 that IMPLAN uses to track movement of dollars through the economy. In a small area such as this, “leakage” occurs, which means that dollars migrate out of the area because the total value can’t be captured by industries within the area. It should be noted that the output and value-added impacts are not cumulative – they measure different types of economic impact, and should not be added together.

Employment impacts are another important aspect of economic impact modeling, and the model estimated that visitors’ expenditures were responsible for 1,250 jobs in the Five Cities area, primarily in recreation and amusement, hotels, restaurants, and retail shops.

The data for total expenditures in the county were also entered into IMPLAN to determine ODSVRA visitors’ impact on San Luis Obispo County. The San Luis Obispo County economic database was used to estimate these impacts. A larger study area typically captures a higher degree of the economic impacts because there is less leakage as the study area increases. Leakage occurs primarily in small study areas that cannot capture as many inter-industry effects; the dollars “leak” out because they cannot be re-spent in other local industries.

Total direct output effects for the county were nearly \$76 million, and with indirect and induced effects included, the result was \$117.8 million in increased economic impact. This figure includes the impacts to the Five Cities area, and is not a separate round of economic effects. Value-added impacts (direct, indirect, and induced) totaled \$69.3 million, and total county employment effects were estimated at 1,726 jobs. One should note that the increased impact to San Luis Obispo County is only about 10 percent greater than the impact to the Five Cities area. This is primarily because the survey data indicated that the Dunes are what might be called a “sticky” destination; once visitors arrived at the Dunes, most of their time and money were spent in the Five Cities area. As indicated in Table 8, 93 percent of the total expenditures by the ODSVRA visitors were spent in the Five Cities; for the most part these visitors did not spend money in other areas of San Luis Obispo County.

In addition, ODSVRA officials provided park expenditure data for their year-round operations, which include nearly \$1.2 million of goods and services purchased from the local area. These figures were imported into IMPLAN. The model estimates that the Five Cities area gained \$1.12 million in direct output demand from the park’s expenditures, which increased to \$1.7 million when indirect and induced effects were added. Estimates for the same impacts countywide resulted in \$1.13 million in direct output effects, with the total reaching over \$1.8 million when indirect and induced impacts were considered.

Reasons for Visits, Amenities, and Place Attachment

In addition to collecting economic and visitor characteristics data, park managers are able to ascertain a great deal about visitors by examining the reasons they visit an

area, the amenities that attract visitors to a particular destination, and how attached individuals are to the resource for its symbolic/emotional and functional attributes. Reasons for visiting OSDVRA were operationalized by ascertaining the importance of specific motivation or recreational experience preferences (Driver, 1977). Amenities were measured based on their perceived importance to visitors. Finally place identity and place dependence dimensions of place attachment were examined (Williams, 2000).

Twenty-five items measured motivation for visiting the park. Table 9 highlights the percentage of experiences considered “important,” “very important,” and “extremely important” on a 5-point Likert type scale. Percentages for “not at all important” and “somewhat important” are not included. The subjects considered the experiences of to be outdoors (99.2%), to get away from daily routines (96.0%), to be near the ocean (95.5%), and to be with family (95.0%) as the most important motivation items. The least important items were for solitude (46.3%), for peace and quiet (47.3%), to get away from other people (51.8%), and to learn about the natural environment (52.1%).

Resource amenities that visitors considered important when visiting ODSVRA were also measured on a 5-point Likert type scale (see Table 10). Once again percentages for “important” to “extremely important” are reported and those for “not at all important” and “somewhat important” are not reported here. The most important amenities when visiting the park were the beach for legal OHV use (95.5%), Five Cities area restaurants (65.1%), shops in downtown Pismo Beach (64.0%), rental shops/locations for ATVs (58.1%), and Pismo Beach outlet stores (53.8%). Amenities rated as the least important were the Lesage Golf Course (16.9%), the Performing Arts Center at Cal Poly (18.5%),

Table 9
Reasons for Visiting ODSVRA (Extremely Important, Very Important, Important)

Reasons for ODSVRA Visit	Percent
	Extremely Important to Important
Be outdoors	99.2%
Get away from daily routines	96.0
Be near ocean	95.5
Be with family	95.0
Be with others who enjoy same things	94.3
Go to beach	93.5
Be with friends	92.0
To use my outdoor recreation equipment	91.5
For excitement	90.5
Be in a natural setting	88.5
For rest & relaxation	85.3
Observe scenic beauty	84.1
Provide outdoor experience for my children	83.8
Experience something new and different	81.5
Improve mental health	71.7
Be in cooler environment	70.0
Go to beach	70.0
To develop skills and abilities	65.8
Observe wild and marine life	61.8
To test my abilities	61.3
Improve physical health	57.5
For risk taking	53.9
Learn about the natural environment	52.1
Get away from other people	51.8
Experience peace and quiet	47.3
For solitude	46.3

Note. Measured on 5-point scale “not at all important” to “extremely important”

art galleries in other San Luis Obispo cities (23.0%), the Bob Jones bike trail (24.4%), and Oso Flaco Lake (24.6%).

Table 10

Amenities When Visiting ODSVRA (Extremely Important, Very Important, Important)

Amenities	Percent Extremely Important to Important
Beach for legal OHV use	95.5%
Five Cities area restaurants	65.1
Shops in downtown Pismo Beach	64.0
Rental shops/locations for ATVs	58.1
Pismo Beach outlet stores	53.8
Avila Beach	52.3
San Luis Pier in Avila Beach	51.5
Tidepools	48.2
Restaurants in other San Luis Obispo County cities	48.0
Shell Beach	46.9
Shops in other San Luis Obispo County cities	46.0
Local surfing spots (e.g. Pismo Pier)	44.7
Elephant seals at Piedras Blancas	43.5
Trails in other San Luis Obispo County locations	43.1
Local clamming spots	37.2
Coastline for ocean kayaking	36.6
Monarch butterflies	36.0
San Luis Obispo Mission	35.3
Hummer Dune tours	35.2
Arroyo Grande Village shops	32.2
Lopez Lake	30.6
Wine tasting in San Luis Obispo County	30.2
Cal Poly campus	28.7
Oso Flaco Lake	24.6
Bob Jones bike trail	24.4
Art Galleries in other San Luis Obispo cities	23.0
Performing Arts Center at Cal Poly	18.5
LeSage golf course	16.9

Note. Measured on 5-point scale “not at all important” to “extremely important”

Place identity and place dependence dimensions of place attachment were measured to determine how park visitors feel about ODSVRA (see Table 11). The 8 items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” For the purposes of this report, the percentages of the mid-point “neutral” are not presented. The highest score was the place dependence dimension indicating that “Oceano Dunes is the best place for what I like to do” (84.5%). The remaining scores were all highest for the place identity dimension with scores of 83.0% for “Oceano Dunes is very special to me,” and 79.7% for “I identify strongly with Oceano Dunes SVRA.”

Table 11
Place Attachment

Place Identity	% Strongly Agree-Agree	% Strongly Disagree-Disagree
ODSVRA special to me	83.0%	1.8%
Identify strongly with ODSVRA	79.7	3.3
Am attached to ODSVRA	78.3	4.8
ODSVRA means a lot to me	79.6	4.5
<hr/>		
<u>Place Dependence</u>		
ODSVRA best place for what I do	84.5	2.3
More satisfaction ODSVRA	75.9	5.8
What I do important ODSVRA	72.0	8.0
Wouldn't substitute other area	70.4	10.5

Note. 5-point Likert scale from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”

Other Comments Regarding ODSVRA

The final item on the survey asked the subjects to “please share with us other comments regarding your visit to Oceano Dunes SVRA.” Responses were grouped

together in themes that matched the aforementioned study at Morro Bay State Park. The four general areas identified were: (a) Dunes visitation, (b) positive comments, (c) suggestions for improvement, and (d) complaints. Specific categories representing the qualitative responses for each general area are located in Appendix F.

Dunes visitation themes included experience history at the ODSVRA, recreational activities, other activities in the region, and group composition. Many of the subjects have apparently been visiting ODSVRA for several years or even decades. In fact, one individual commented about driving from New York every year to visit the Dunes. Other individuals visit frequently and some individuals began visiting the Dunes during childhood. The activities represented in the open-ended responses were generally what would be expected of visitors to ODSVRA. Riding ATVs and camping were frequent comments. Some subjects discussed the economic benefit of the Dunes to the area, activities such as eating at restaurants that occur outside the Dunes, and other activities that they would like to pursue during future visits. The subjects also commented on return visits to ODSVRA and that they were often visiting the Dunes with family or friends and family.

Positive comments focused on the friendly staff and their response to emergency situations, the benefits subjects received from visiting the Dunes, place attachment to the Dunes, and the role that family played in a Dunes experience. In addition to the positive staff comments a couple of subjects indicated that there appears to be less trash than in previous years. Comments regarding the benefits that the subjects experienced from a visit to the Dunes were extensive. The benefits included enjoyment, fun, a great time, a safe place to recreate, the ability to get away, relax, and spend time with others. There

were numerous statements regarding the importance of family and its relationship to a visit at the ODSVRA. Some comments indicated that families have been visiting the Dunes for multiple generations. Others emphasized that it is their favorite place to visit with family and/or friends to participate in a recreational activity together. A couple of subjects stated that some of their most memorable family experiences had occurred at the Dunes. The attachment that the subjects have to the ODSVRA was expressed in their comments about its uniqueness as a place to ride, their feelings that it is a great place to ride and camp, and their love for the Dunes.

A third area of comments provided suggestions for improvement regarding park maintenance, visitor management, and access to the Dunes. The most common themes in the first two categories included recommendations for keeping the beach cleaner, increased enforcement, and use limitation suggestions. Accessibility issues garnered numerous comments primarily requesting that the Dunes be kept open and that riding areas be increased.

The final general area of comments centered on complaints that visitors had about the operations or current conditions of the ODSVRA. One theme of complaints emphasized decreased access to riding areas. A second complaint theme indicated that crowding is an issue for camping and overall use. Thirdly, some visitors encountered rude behavior from park personnel. Other comments focused on the poor condition of restrooms and litter on the beach.

Conclusions

Based on the results of the survey, Oceano Dunes SVRA visitors exhibit a number of specific subject characteristics. The subjects are primarily visiting the park with family and friends or family with an average age of approximately 38 years old per respondent. Most of the subjects are married and are male. Nearly 70% of the subjects have completed some college or a 4-year degree and almost 1/3 of the subjects report an annual household income of \$100,000 or greater. The mean number of nights stay at the ODSVRA is about 2.4 nights and the subjects reside, on average about 200 miles from the Dunes. The top three counties of residence are in the California Central Valley. The most frequent recreational activities when visiting the Dunes are ATV riding on the beach, driving on the beach, camping, walking, and driving for pleasure on the beach.

The visitors to the ODSVRA have a significant economic impact on the Five Cities area and San Luis Obispo County with direct annual impacts of approximately \$70 million and the generation of jobs in recreation and amusement, hotels, restaurants, and retail shops. The highest expenditure categories are for food and beverages in the Five Cities area, private auto expenses in the Five Cities area, and retail shopping in the Five Cities area including souvenirs, gifts, film, bait, supplies, and groceries.

Reasons for visiting ODSVRA, important resource amenities, and the place attachment that visitors have to the Dunes are apparent. The most important reasons for visiting the ODSVRA focus on the natural resources setting of the Dunes, being with others such as friends and family, and getting away from daily routines. The most important amenities when visiting the Dunes are first and foremost, the beach for legal OHV use, but also the amenities of surrounding communities including Five Cities area

restaurants, shops in downtown Pismo Beach, and rental shops/locations for ATVs. The subjects express their place attachment with the Dunes by depending on it as “the best place for what I like to do,” and through the emotional attachment they have with the Dunes through its meaning as a special place, and their self-identification with the Dunes.

A few limitations to the study are present. The initial data collection plan called for the survey to be administered in 2005. However, due to personnel changes within the project and an initial lower than expected response rate, we needed to collect additional data during 2007. Although the sample size is adequate to make generalizations to a population of greater than 1,000,000 individuals at a 95 percent confidence interval, some caution should be taken regarding the response rate of approximately 45 percent. A discussion with nationally renowned survey researchers in the recreation and park management field (personal communication, Robert Burns, West Virginia University; Kelly Bricker, University of Utah, June 19, 2007) indicated that increasingly outdoor recreation survey research is declining in participation rates with frequent survey response rates well below 50 percent. For example, whereas the response rate for this study was less than 50 percent, the response rate for the Morro Bay State Park study, only a few years earlier was over 70 percent. The two studies differed little in research design and questionnaire format that are sometimes sources of lower response rates; however, the situation at ODSVRA seems to be much more contentious regarding OHV use of the Dunes. Although we did not systematically collect data regarding trust of surveys by visitors to the Dunes, research assistants received numerous verbal comments reflecting a lack of trust for how the survey results would be used. Many individuals contacted at the Dunes were very cautious about the purpose of the study and fearful of the Dunes being

closed. From an opposite perspective, there were individuals who were concerned how the study might support continued use of the Dunes by OHVs. These perceptions may have had an influence on response rate.

It is important to note that economic impact studies should always be viewed as an estimate of visitor expenditures and that estimates of even a single event, program, park, or area can vary greatly. We have attempted to take great care in presenting an accurate estimation from an economic impact model designed to ascertain park visitor expenditures.

The results of this study support the position that visitors to Oceano Dunes SVRA contribute economically to the Five Cities area and to San Luis Obispo County. The additional information provided in this report regarding visitor characteristics, visitor motivation, resource amenities, place attachment, and the rich set of written comments from the open-ended item will also offer the California Department of Parks and Recreation information for future park planning, visitor services, maintenance, and management of the Dunes.

References

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- Dillman, D. A. (2000). *Mail and electronic surveys: The tailored design method*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
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Appendix

Appendix A
Contact Interview

Code # _____

Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area Survey
Visitor Contact Form

Date _____

Day of Week _____

1. Time _____

2. Location of Contact

North of Pole 2 _____

South of Pole 4 _____

South of Pole 7 _____

South of Pole 2 _____

South of Pole 5 _____

South of Pole 8 _____

South of Pole 3 _____

South of Pole 6 _____

Ask for...

3. Number of people in group?

Adults _____

Children _____

4. How many OHVs does your group have and what types of OHVs are they?

5. Check here if you gave them a questionnaire. _____

*Ask for mailing information for a follow-up questionnaire even if you gave them one.***Mailing** (be certain to get correct spelling and make sure the writing is legible)

Name: First _____

Last _____

Mr. ρ Mrs. ρ Ms. ρ

Dr. ρ

Street: _____

City: _____

State: _____

Zip _____

Appendix B
ODSVRA Survey



Oceano Dunes SVRA Visitor Survey

Cal Poly's Recreation, Parks, & Tourism Administration Program in cooperation with the California State Parks, Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area is conducting this survey to assess your experiences and expenditures during your visit to Oceano Dunes.

By completing and returning your questionnaire you are eligible for a drawing to win

***An OHV Annual Day-Use Pass and Two Nights Camping
at Oceano Dunes SVRA for up to four vehicles***

*If your questionnaire is returned within 7 days, you will be mailed a complimentary **Single Day-Use Pass** that expires December 31, 2007.*

Thank you for helping to assess recreational opportunities and services at Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area.

Sponsored by:

California State Parks Oceano Dunes District

Survey conducted by:

**Recreation, Parks, & Tourism Administration Program
Natural Resources Management Department
Cal Poly**

Questions?

Contact:

Bill Hendricks, Ph.D.

Recreation, Parks and Tourism Administration/NRM
California Polytechnic State University
San Luis Obispo, CA 93407
(805) 756-1246

Please respond to the following questions as completely as possible. Each section of the questionnaire relates to your experiences while visiting Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area (SVRA) and San Luis Obispo County. If you were visiting other destinations outside of San Luis Obispo County during your vacation, please do not include this information in your responses unless specified. Thank you.

The following questions pertain to the characteristics of your visit to Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area. The map on page 2 defines the boundaries of San Luis Obispo County. Please use it on certain questions as specified.

1. During your recent visit to Oceano Dunes SVRA were you camping overnight in the park or were you a day-use visitor? (check one only)

☐ Overnight camping

☐ Day-use visitor (if you checked day-use skip to item #4)

2. If you were camping overnight, what type of *overnight camping* were you doing? (check one only)

☐ Recreational vehicle

☐ Tent camping

☐ Trailer/5th wheel

☐ Truck camper

3. How many nights did you stay in the park? _____

4. In what California county do you currently reside? (if you do not live in California, indicate the state or country of your principal residence) _____

5. What is the zip code of your current, principal residence? _____

6. Approximately how many miles is your current, principal residence from Oceano Dunes?

7. Approximately how many hours and/or minutes in driving time is your principal residence from Oceano Dunes? _____ Hours _____ Minutes

8. Did you stay in any other locations overnight in San Luis Obispo County (see map on adjacent page) other than Oceano Dunes SVRA or your home residence during your visit to the park?

☐ Yes

☐ No (if no, skip to item #9)

- 8a. If yes, where did you stay during your trip to San Luis Obispo County? (check all that apply)

☐ Hotel/motel/bed & breakfast (provide name & location)_____

☐ Other campground (provide name & location)_____

☐ With friends/family

☐ Other (please specify)_____

- 8b. During your trip, how many nights did you stay in San Luis Obispo County other than those spent at Oceano Dunes SVRA? _____



9. Which of the following best represents your visit to Oceano Dunes SVRA? (check one only)

☐ It was the only destination for this trip

☐ It was one location of a multi-destination trip within San Luis Obispo County

☐ It was one location of a multi-destination trip both within and outside San Luis Obispo County

10. If Oceano Dunes was not in existence (no OHV riding, no camping, no trails, etc.) during your visit to the area, would you still: (**please answer both questions**)

Visit the Five Cities Area? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Uncertain
(Five Cities includes Pismo Beach, Arroyo Grande, Grover Beach, Oceano, and Shell Beach)

Visit San Luis Obispo County? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Uncertain

Please continue on next page

Now we are going to ask about your expenditures during your visit to Oceano Dunes SVRA.

11. How many people (including yourself) were in your immediate group when visiting Oceano Dunes SVRA? _____
12. To better understand the economic impact of visitors to Oceano Dunes SVRA on the surrounding communities we are interested in finding out the approximate amount of money you and other visitors in your immediate group spent in San Luis Obispo County (see map) during your visit to Oceano Dunes SVRA. We understand that this is a difficult question, but please do your best because your responses are very important to our efforts. **During your visit, what is the approximate amount your entire group spent in each of the following categories?** (if there was no expenditure write a zero in the space)

<p><i>Please remember the Five Cities Area includes Pismo Beach, Arroyo Grande, Oceano, Grover Beach and Shell Beach.</i></p>

*Amount spent
in Five
Cities Area*

*Amount spent
in other
San Luis Obispo
County areas*
*refer to map on page 2

Type of Expenditure

- | | | |
|---|-----------|-------|
| A. Lodging expenses (hotels/motels, bed & breakfast, private campgrounds) | \$ _____ | _____ |
| B. Camping/day-use fees at Oceano Dunes SVRA | \$ _____ | _____ |
| C. Camping/day-use fees at public campgrounds other than Oceano Dunes SVRA
* include North Beach & Oceano Campgrounds at Pismo State Beach | \$ _____* | _____ |
| D. Food & beverages at restaurants, concessions, bars | \$ _____ | _____ |
| E. Private auto expenses (gas, oil, repairs, parking fees, public transportation) | \$ _____ | _____ |
| F. Retail shopping (souvenirs, gifts, film, bait, supplies, groceries, etc.) | \$ _____ | _____ |
| G. Recreation activities (equipment purchases, rentals, lessons, tours, guides, admission fees, cover charges, services, etc.) | \$ _____ | _____ |
| H. Any other expenses
Please specify _____ | \$ _____ | _____ |

The next set of items concern reasons you visited Oceano Dunes SVRA.

13. Below is a list of general reasons that people seek outdoor recreation experiences. For each item please circle the number that indicates how important each experience is to you when visiting Oceano Dunes SVRA.

<i>Reasons</i>	<i>Importance</i>				
	Not at all important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important	Extremely important
To be with friends	1	2	3	4	5
To be outdoors	1	2	3	4	5
To be near the ocean	1	2	3	4	5
To be with family	1	2	3	4	5
To get away from other people	1	2	3	4	5
To be in a cooler environment	1	2	3	4	5
To experience peace and quiet	1	2	3	4	5
To observe the scenic beauty	1	2	3	4	5
To improve my physical health	1	2	3	4	5
For excitement	1	2	3	4	5
To experience something new and different	1	2	3	4	5
For rest and relaxation	1	2	3	4	5
To get away from daily routines	1	2	3	4	5
To be in a natural setting	1	2	3	4	5
To provide an outdoor experience for my children	1	2	3	4	5
To be with others who enjoy the same things I do	1	2	3	4	5
To observe wildlife and marine life	1	2	3	4	5
To learn about the natural environment	1	2	3	4	5
For solitude	1	2	3	4	5
To improve my mental health	1	2	3	4	5
To go to the beach	1	2	3	4	5
For risk taking	1	2	3	4	5
To test my abilities	1	2	3	4	5
To develop my skills and abilities	1	2	3	4	5
To use my outdoor recreation equipment	1	2	3	4	5

Please continue on next page

14. The following list of amenities is more specific to Oceano Dunes SVRA and the surrounding area. For each item please circle the number that indicates how important each amenity is to you when visiting Oceano Dunes SVRA.

<i>Amenities</i>	<i>Importance</i>				
	Not at all important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important	Extremely important
The beach for legal OHV use	1	2	3	4	5
The LeSage golf course	1	2	3	4	5
Pismo Beach Outlet Stores	1	2	3	4	5
Shops in Downtown Pismo Beach	1	2	3	4	5
Shops in San Luis Obispo County outside Five Cities Area	1	2	3	4	5
The monarch butterflies	1	2	3	4	5
Shell Beach	1	2	3	4	5
Avila Beach	1	2	3	4	5
San Luis Bay Pier in Avila Beach	1	2	3	4	5
Tidepools	1	2	3	4	5
Wine tasting in San Luis Obispo County	1	2	3	4	5
Restaurants in Five Cities Area	1	2	3	4	5
Restaurants in other San Luis Obispo County cities	1	2	3	4	5
Oso Flaco Lake	1	2	3	4	5
Lopez Lake	1	2	3	4	5
Arroyo Grande Village Shops	1	2	3	4	5
The Cal Poly campus	1	2	3	4	5
The Performing Arts Center at Cal Poly	1	2	3	4	5
Bob Jones bike trail	1	2	3	4	5
Rental shops/locations for ATVs	1	2	3	4	5
Trails in other San Luis Obispo County locations	1	2	3	4	5
The San Luis Obispo Mission	1	2	3	4	5
Art galleries in other San Luis Obispo County cities	1	2	3	4	5
The elephant seals at Piedras Blancas	1	2	3	4	5
Local surfing spots (e.g. Pismo Pier)	1	2	3	4	5
Coastline for ocean kayaking	1	2	3	4	5
Hummer Dune Tours	1	2	3	4	5
Local clamming spots	1	2	3	4	5

15. Below is a list of statements that indicate how visitors might feel about Oceano Dunes SVRA. For each item please circle the number that indicates your level of agreement with the statement regarding your attachment to Oceano Dunes SVRA.

	<i>Agreement</i>				
<i>Feelings about Oceano Dunes SVRA</i>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Oceano Dunes SVRA is the best place for what I like to do.	1	2	3	4	5
Oceano Dunes SVRA is very special to me.	1	2	3	4	5
I identify strongly with Oceano Dunes SVRA.	1	2	3	4	5
I get more satisfaction out of visiting Oceano Dunes SVRA than from visiting any other OHV area.	1	2	3	4	5
I am very attached to Oceano Dunes SVRA.	1	2	3	4	5
Doing what I do at Oceano Dunes SVRA is more important to me than doing it in any other place.	1	2	3	4	5
Oceano Dunes SVRA means a lot to me.	1	2	3	4	5
I wouldn't substitute any other area for doing the types of things I do at Oceano Dunes SVRA.	1	2	3	4	5

16. Which of these recreational activities did your group participate in, within the park and San Luis Obispo County during your visit to Oceano Dunes SVRA? (check all that apply)

<input type="checkbox"/> Hiking	<input type="checkbox"/> Golf
<input type="checkbox"/> Camping	<input type="checkbox"/> Bird watching
<input type="checkbox"/> Picnicking	<input type="checkbox"/> Wild/marine life viewing
<input type="checkbox"/> Kayaking	<input type="checkbox"/> Kite boarding
<input type="checkbox"/> Canoeing	<input type="checkbox"/> ATV riding on the beach
<input type="checkbox"/> Sailing	<input type="checkbox"/> Walking for pleasure
<input type="checkbox"/> Mountain biking	<input type="checkbox"/> Beach combing
<input type="checkbox"/> Road biking	<input type="checkbox"/> Photography
<input type="checkbox"/> Sightseeing	<input type="checkbox"/> Nature exploration
<input type="checkbox"/> Clam digging	<input type="checkbox"/> Taking dog for a walk
<input type="checkbox"/> Junior ranger program	<input type="checkbox"/> Naturalist-led activities
<input type="checkbox"/> Ocean fishing	<input type="checkbox"/> Eating at a restaurant(s) in Five Cities
<input type="checkbox"/> Driving for pleasure on beach	<input type="checkbox"/> Swimming/wading in the ocean
<input type="checkbox"/> Jogging/running	<input type="checkbox"/> Exploring tidepools
<input type="checkbox"/> Sunbathing at the beach	<input type="checkbox"/> Boogie boarding
<input type="checkbox"/> Surfing	<input type="checkbox"/> Wine tasting
<input type="checkbox"/> Scuba/snorkel	<input type="checkbox"/> Horseback riding
<input type="checkbox"/> Sand raiing	<input type="checkbox"/> Shopping in the Five Cities Area
<input type="checkbox"/> Driving on the beach	<input type="checkbox"/> Motorcycle riding on the beach
<input type="checkbox"/> Dunes tour	<input type="checkbox"/> Jet skiing
<input type="checkbox"/> Wind surfing	<input type="checkbox"/> Driving for pleasure on highway/road

☐ Other (please specify) _____

Please continue on next page

This final set of questions provides us with information about you and your group when you visited Oceano Dunes SVRA.

17. During your visit to Oceano Dunes SVRA, please indicate the type of group that best defines who you were with. (check one only)

- ☐ Family members
- ☐ Family *and* friends
- ☐ Friends
- ☐ By yourself

- ☐ Club or organization
- ☐ School or study group
- ☐ Commercial tour
- ☐ Other (please specify) _____

18. Are you? ☐ Female ☐ Male

19. What is your marital status? (check one only) ☐ Married ☐ Unmarried

20. What is your present age? _____ years

21. What is the highest level of education that you have completed? (check one only)

- ☐ Completed grade school
- ☐ Some high school
- ☐ Completed high school
- ☐ Some college

- ☐ Completed 4 year college degree
- ☐ Some graduate school
- ☐ Completed graduate degree

22. Which of the following categories best represents your annual household income? (check one only)

- ☐ Less than \$10,000
- ☐ \$10,000 to \$19,999
- ☐ \$20,000 to \$29,999
- ☐ \$30,000 to \$39,999
- ☐ \$40,000 to \$49,999
- ☐ \$50,000 to \$59,999

- ☐ \$60,000 to \$69,999
- ☐ \$70,000 to \$79,999
- ☐ \$80,000 to \$89,999
- ☐ \$90,000 to \$99,999
- ☐ \$100,000 or greater

23. Please share with us other comments regarding your visit to Oceano Dunes SVRA.

Thank you for your time and participation in this survey!
Please return the questionnaire in the stamped, addressed envelope.

Appendix C

First Cover Letter

Date

Name
Street Address
City, State, Zip

Dear Mr./Ms./Mrs.:

Thank you for answering our interviewer's brief questions during your visit to Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area. Cal Poly's Recreation, Parks, & Tourism Administration Program is working with the California State Parks, Oceano Dunes District to assess your experiences and expenditures during your visit to the park.

Your participation in this survey will aid the park's staff in better understanding its visitors. Since you are one of relatively few visitors in the sample chosen for this survey, it is extremely important that your views are heard. Your participation in the study is completely voluntary and you can be assured that your responses will remain strictly confidential. The questionnaire has an identification number for tracking purposes only. Your name will not be placed on the questionnaire or linked with your answers in any way.

Following your visit to Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area, please return your completed questionnaire in the postage paid, business reply return envelope that has been provided for your convenience. The questionnaire will take approximately 10 - 15 minutes to complete. By completing and returning your questionnaire, you are eligible for a drawing to ***win an annual OHV day-use pass and two nights camping for up to four vehicles at the Dunes***. If your questionnaire is returned within seven days, you will be mailed a complimentary ***single day-use pass*** that expires December 31, 2007.

We would be happy to answer any questions that you might have regarding this survey. You may write us at the address above or call me personally at (805) 756-1246. We appreciate your time and cooperation. Thank you again for helping to assess recreational opportunities and services at Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area.

Sincerely,

Bill Hendricks, Ph.D.
Principal Investigator

Appendix D
Reminder Postcard

Recently a questionnaire concerning your visit to Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area was mailed to you. You were selected along with other visitors in order to assess visitor expenditures and experiences.

If you have already completed and returned the questionnaire, please accept our sincere thanks. If not, please do so as quickly as possible. It is extremely important that your questionnaire be returned to help represent the diverse interests of park visitors.

If you did not receive the questionnaire, or if it has been misplaced, please call right away (805) 756-1246 and we will send another one to you today.

Sincerely,

Bill Hendricks, Ph.D.

Appendix E

Second Cover Letter

Date

Name
Street Address
City, State, Zip

Dear Mr./Ms./Mrs.:

A few weeks ago you were sent a questionnaire regarding your recent visit to Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area. As you may recall, California State Parks is interested in assessing your experiences and expenditures during your visit to the park.

We have not heard from you and are sending a second questionnaire because we value the input of each visitor who was contacted at Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area. If you have already completed and returned the first questionnaire, please accept our sincere thanks. If not, please do so as quickly as possible. Because of the diverse interests of park visitors, it is important that your responses are considered. A stamped, self-addressed return envelope is provided for your convenience.

Thank you again for your willingness to answer our interviewers brief questions while you were visiting Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area. We would like to remind you that participation in this study is completely voluntary and you can be assured that your responses will remain strictly confidential. The questionnaire has an identification number for tracking purposes only. Your name will not be placed on the questionnaire or linked with your answers in any way. Also, please remember that by completing and returning your questionnaire you are eligible for a drawing to ***win an annual OHV day-use pass and two nights camping for up to four vehicles at the Dunes.***

We would be happy to answer any questions that you might have regarding this survey. You may write us at the address above or call me personally at (805) 756-1246. We appreciate your time and cooperation. Thank you again for helping to assess recreational opportunities and services at Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area.

Sincerely,

Bill Hendricks, Ph.D.
Principal Investigator

Appendix F
ODSVRA Comments

Dunes Visitation

Experience History

Have been visiting ODSVRA for 46 years
 Have been visiting for 41 years
 Have been visiting for 35 years
 Have been coming for 34 years
 Been coming for 30+ years
 Have been coming for 30 years
 Have been visiting since 1977: visit 2-3 times a year
 Have been visiting Oceano Dunes for over 29 years
 Have been visiting over 25 years
 Have been visiting Dunes for 25 years, now I take my children
 Have been coming for 25 years
 Visiting for over 25 years
 Coming over 20 years
 Visit for past 14 yrs
 10th annual trip
 Used to visit at least once a year, for past 10 years I visit 2-3 times per year
 Have been visiting for past 8 years
 Fourth summer visiting ODSVRA
 We have visited for the past four years
 We come at least twice a month-some day trips, some long trips
 Have been camping at ODSVRA since young boy
 Have been coming for a while
 Have been visiting all my life/ hope my children can do the same
 Have been visiting since I was a child
 Spend a lot of time here
 Drive from New York to visit every year
 Visit at least 4 times a year
 Have visited 3 times this year
 Visit 12-15 times/yr.
 Visit 7-8 times per year
 Visit 1 or 2 times per year
 Visit EVERY weekend
 Visit monthly
 Visit often
 Visit several times a year
 Visit throughout summer
 Have been enjoying the dunes for a very long time
 Try to visit at least 6 times a year
 We used to go seven times a year now we go three times a year
 During the past two years I have enjoyed some of best times of my life at the dunes
 We have spent every 4th of July, President's and Labor Day weekend
 We visit Oceano 6-10 times a year
 We usually stay for 5-7 days

Visit 4-5 times per year
 Usually visit once a month or more
 We like to camp at the dunes all year long and visit often
 Many more visits planned
 Plan to come back
 Spend as much time here as we can
 Visit often
 Have been visiting since I was a child
 Came to Oceano Dunes often as a child
 I started going to the dunes when I was two years old
 Have been going to Oceano Dunes since I was little
 Like to come on weekends
 Great first visit
 First time
 First time
 First time
 First visit: like it a lot

Activities

Only place to drive on beach other than Australia
 Drive on beach
 Drive on beach
 Riding in the dunes
 Ride
 Riding
 Ride sand dunes during summer when everything else is too hot
 Ride ATVs
 Riding on beach night or day
 Ride
 Ride off-road vehicles
 Ride
 Ride
 Ride
 Ride ATVs
 Ride ATVs
 Ride sand rail
 Ride quads
 Jet skis
 Ride quads
 Sand rails
 Motorcycles and ATVs on beach
 OHV use
 OHV riding
 Off-roading
 ATVs

Six vehicles and wheeled all day and night
 4x4
 4-wheeled every day
 Camp on beach
 Camp and ride quads
 Camping
 Camping on sand
 Camp on beach
 Camp on beach in motorhome
 Camp
 Camp
 Camp in trailer on beach
 Brought 5 tents and 4 trailers
 On 4th of July we had 30 trailers in our camp
 Walk
 Walk
 Walking along the coast
 BBQ
 Sit and read on beach
 Collect shells
 Film
 Watch sunsets and sunrises
 Our children fished
 Beach race was a great addition

Other Central Coast Locations/Activities

Can do anything locally; ride, shop, eat
 Like to engage in other local activities on separate visits
 Survey indicates there is a lot more to do; I will investigate and likely do wine tours
 We had no idea there were so many activities in the surrounding area
 Money spent on off-road vehicle equipment helps local economy
 Spend money in community
 We spend a lot of money when we come to the dunes
 Would be happy to spend money in SLO County without this SVRA
 Want to experience other activities in the area with family
 Would love more info on SLO area activities (wine tasting, mission, Piedras Blancas)
 Eat on beach and local restaurants
 Excellent food
 Visit local restaurants
 Eat on beach and local restaurants
 Shop locally and eat at local restaurants
 Spend a lot of time in downtown areas in SLO county while visiting
 Wife loves to shop in area
 Learned more about the local area when visiting
 Went to Hearst castle one day

Exploring San Luis Obispo County
I also like Lopez Lake

Return to Dunes

Will return
Will return
Will return with friends and family
Will continue to return
Will keep visiting area as long as ODSVRA is open to public
Will keep visiting area as long as ODSVRA is open to public
We will be going down to Pismo Beach once a month now
Will definitely come back
Look forward to coming back as often as we can
Look forward to coming back
Strongly look forward to visits here
Look forward to coming back
Look forward to visiting again soon
Look forward to next trip to Dunes

Group Composition

With family
With my family
Family outing
Visit with friends and family on holiday weekends & some others
Family of 2-3 people traveling with 3-6 other families
Visit dunes with family and friends
Always bring a huge group of people with us
Visit with families from Los Angeles and Sacramento
Our family and friends visit frequently
Visit regularly with friends and family
Oceano has been vacation spot for our family
Come with family and friends
Here with family
With family and friends

Positive Comments

Staffing, Park Maintenance & Management

Officers calmed down a domestic problem without ruining my weekend
Rangers very nice and helpful
Great response to an emergency on the beach
Staff is friendly
Well patrolled

People seem to be getting the point: pack it in, pack it out
 Dunes have less trash this year than in years past
 Thank you for keeping it a nice and safe place

Benefits from Visit

Riding in the Dunes is an experience like no other
 A unique experience

Fun

Fun place to be with friends

Fun

Lots of fun for all ages

Go for fun

Good clean fun

A lot of fun

Had fun

Really enjoy it

Enjoy

Perfect

Enjoy

Enjoy

Enjoy

Enjoy beach Raving

Enjoy off roading on dunes

Enjoyable

Enjoyable

Enjoy all aspects of the activity

Enjoy coming to dunes

Enjoy coming to dunes

Enjoy it very much

I enjoy the dunes

Always enjoy visiting

Enjoy a variety of outdoor activities

Very enjoyable place to come and relax

Absolutely enjoyed my time here

It rocks

It was wonderful

It was wonderful

Awesome

Awesome

Awesome

Never had a bad trip

Always have a wonderful time

It's all perfect

Always have a great time

Great for everyone

Great
Always have a great time
Had a great time
One of biggest summer highlights
Great time with others
Great meeting place for get-togethers
Like being around people with same interests
Be together
Self and family are riders because of OD
Weather and scenery are lovely
Safe place to bring family to ride quads
Safe place to bring kids to ride dirt bikes
So many fun activities
Like to stay on beach for 8 days, most people don't get to experience this
Like that it is close to home
Like that the city is close unlike other CA dunes
Like that there are no hotels or high priced amusement parks, just outdoor fun
Pleasing
Love the privilege of enjoying and respecting this beautiful spot
We totally enjoy this sport and our area
There is no other place I can ride and enjoy the beach at the same time
One of the only places where people feel safe and relaxed with children
Only place on the Cal-coast we can get this close to the water
Close to home
Nice place to get away
Get away and recreate
Get away
Get away
Get away
Place to get away
Relax and play
Relax
Very relaxing
Relaxing
Really relaxing
Relaxing
Camping on the beach is most relaxing vacation
It rocks
Share time with friends
Something for everybody to do-all ages
Good for mental health
Stress relief from work, life, everything
It keeps me sane
Best and only place in area to enjoy what we love
Big part of our lives
Nice peaceful day

We watched the beautiful sunset

Importance of Family

Camping with our five kids here is something they will always remember
 Hope children will grow up to love OHV recreation
 Hope my kids can take their family to dunes someday
 It is a vacation my children always remember
 Parents took me to dunes, now I take my family
 Family has been coming every year since 1966: 2 generations
 Family has been coming for 3 generations
 If there is nothing for the next generation to do they will get bored and get into trouble
 Great vacation spot for my family and friends
 Want to share experience with our family for generations
 Enjoy time at the beach with family & friends
 Most fun we have with family and friends
 Fun place to take family to play and recover
 Family and friends enjoy taking quads and having fun
 Family and friends enjoy being together
 Brings family and friends together
 ODSVRA is a fantastic place to take my family
 Come with family and friends
 Real close family outing
 A blast for the whole family
 Good clean family fun
 Without Pismo we could not enjoy family time while doing what we love
 Great place to go and be with family and friends
 Really enjoy the closeness of family & friends while camping on beach
 Wonderful place to visit and watch my children grow
 Enjoy watching kids doing things we didn't get to do when we were younger
 We usually visit with 4-5 other families
 We visit with family and friends
 Perfect setting for giving memories to children
 Family oriented
 Family looks forward to trips to ride quads and watch whales and sunsets
 Wonderful place for family and friends
 Best place to have good family fun
 Best place for friends and family to come
 Enjoy taking children to dunes
 Enjoy visiting with friends and family
 Family of four enjoys ATV/motorcycling
 Family really enjoys outdoors and dunes for riding ATVs
 Favorite place to come with family and friends
 Favorite place to come with friends and family
 Relaxation with family
 Friends and family reunion
 Great place to come with family and friends

Great place for family and friends/quality time
Great place for family, friends, and new people
Great place to get away with friends and family
Great place to ride with friends and family
Great place to ride with friends and family
Great place to ride with friends and family
Great place to visit with family
Great place to visit with family
Great place to visit with family
Great place to visit with family & friends
Great place to visit with family & friends
Great place to visit with family & friends
Great place to visit with family and friends
Have fun with friends and family
Great time for friends and family, especially for kids
Love to visit with friends and family
Love visiting with friends and family
Come to visit family and camp with friends
My children will probably bring their children
Perfect for family
Place is important to my family
Our #1 pick for family vacations
Hope to share these experiences with my children
Look forward to many more years of enjoyment with friends and family
Great family experience
Great place to visit with family and friends
I look forward to taking my grandchildren on similar rides in the future
Very important place to my family and friends
Sons and I share common activity
Sons can develop riding skills
Very enjoyable place to visit with family
Best time of 4 year old and 6 year old daughters lives
Perfect place to meditate and be with family
Gives our kids something to do
Children love to ride
Great place for the kids to learn
Can take my two year old boy for rides around the camp
My five year old can learn to ride a quad
Family had a great time
Family loves it
It means the world to my kids and me
Children and grandchildren love it
Two big bonuses to area are being at the beach with quads and seeing other families do the same

Attachment to Area Resources

Used to come on vacation, loved it so much that I moved to the area
 Love the area
 Very beautiful area
 Love the sand
 Love to go to town for clam chowder and pier
 Love watching sunset and waves
 Love the people
 Love the food
 Location and atmosphere

Attachment to the Dunes

Last beach in CA where people can ride ATVs and Jet Skis and camp in one
 Only place in CA to drive on beach and launch jet skis
 Nowhere else in CA for family to ride ATVs on beach
 It is the only place to ride on the beach near the ocean
 Care very much about the dunes
 Only spot to ride ATVs on the beach
 Awesome place for riding
 Good location: close to home
 Beautiful park
 Beautiful place
 Beautiful
 ODSVRA is the best place to ride because of the location
 One of few spots to drive/ride on beach
 Nicest place to ride
 ODSVRA is the last of its kind
 Great place
 Great place
 Be outdoors
 Great place
 Incredible place, nothing like it
 It's our favorite place to go for fun
 Kids' favorite place
 Nice place close to home
 Nice place to visit
 No place like OD
 Great place
 Great place
 Great place to come for weekend
 Great place
 Great place to visit
 Great place to be outdoors
 Great place to play with ATVs

Great place to 4x4
Great place to ride
Great place to ride
Great place to camp
Great place to hang with friends
Great place to get on outdoor recreation vehicles
Best place
Best place to ride
Best place for OHV use
Nicest place to ride sand dunes
Best place
Beach is a great getaway
No place like it in CA
Best place to ATV within 3 hour distance
Wonderful place to escape heat
No other place like it
Favorite place to go
Favorite place to ride
Favorite place to get away
It's our favorite place
Wonderful place for OHV riding
Great to be able to camp and ride ATVs on the beach
Incredible place, nothing like it
One of a kind vacation site
One of the best places I've ridden my quad
Favorite place to go
Fantastic place
Perfect place to visit and vacation
We love this beach
Attracted to Oceano Dunes for outdoor activities
Pismo is like another home to me
One of my favorite spots to visit
Love views, sand, and beach at ODSVRA
Love visiting SLO and ODSVRA
Love to camp on beach and ride OHVs
Love riding OHV in ODSVRA
Love riding on the beach
Love surfing and OHV use
Love camping with friends and family at ODSVRA
Love coming to ODSVRA to ride OHV and be with friends and family
Love off-roading at ODSVRA
Love playing in sand
Love the dunes
Love the dunes
Love it
Love it

Love it
 Love it
 Love it
 Love it
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 Love it
 Love it
 Love it
 Love it
 Love it
 Love it
 Love it
 Love it
 Love it
 Love it
 Love it
 Love it
 Love love love it
 We love it!
 Love visiting and quading
 My family loves it
 I love it here
 The place is near and dear to me
 Love going to oceano dunes
 Love oceano dunes
 It is well worth drive to camp and drive on dunes and beach
 Love that there are different trails and rides to suit new to veteran riders
 Love it
 Love to ride
 Love to go to dunes
 Love being able to ride my quads at the beach
 Always love it
 Love riding quads at the dunes
 Love it
 We love the dunes
 I love the dunes
 We love Pismo beach
 My favorite place ever
 Most unique place

Other Positive Comments

Friends drive from all over western U.S. to visit
 Would visit Oceano Dunes even if there were other places nearby
 Would camp even if I couldn't use my ATV
 It's the gem of SLO

Its obvious how popular this place is
 Oceano dunes is pretty cool
 We have dunned all our lives
 We have always respected the dunes
 Perfect temperature
 Perfect beaches
 New people getting into the sport
 Wife is disabled
 West side
 Great trip
 Great weather
 Don't change a thing
 Glad ODSVRA exists
 We know several groups of people that visit
 It brings in millions and millions of dollars to local area and state
 Pismo brings in a lot of money
 A definite bargain

Suggestions for Improvement

Park Maintenance and Visitor Management

People should be fined for littering
 People should be fined for littering
 People should pack their trash
 Clean up trash on beach and dunes or enforce litter laws
 Pack it in, pack it out
 Trash bags and cans are provided
 Hope rangers can enforce hauling trash out
 Need to keep the beach cleaner
 Would participate in clean up days
 More speed limit signs needed
 Speed limit signs should indicate that they are for all vehicles and riders
 More organization needed at dunes
 Should have limit number of people allowed on beach
 Please put entrance past river so don't have to cross it
 Space should be monitored so there is space for people to camp in tents between campers
 Need water and electric for RV sites on the ocean
 Day-use visitors should not be allowed to park in the camping area
 Need camping spot for memorial weekend
 Gladly pay more \$ in fees to keep ODSVRA open and maintained
 Fires should not be left unattended
 Provide developed campgrounds with direct ATV access to beach and dunes
 Would like to see more park rangers enforcing the rules
 Reckless/Drunk ATV drivers should be ticketed
 Raise prices to \$20 per night if more land can be made available

Raise prices and use money for cleaning
 Would like events for adults and children
 Lessons should be required for children
 Want area that is strictly for overnight/picnic to enjoy peace
 Need to have a class for people renting ATVs
 Would come back more if more was offered
 Would be nice if there was a time for riding to be quiet (i.e. 1:00-6:00am) no riding
 Wish people had to stop riding at a certain time like midnight
 Wish people wouldn't ride before 8am
 It is important to educate beach campers to respect the recreation area so it is same when they leave as when they arrive
 Hope for balance between natural habitat and recreation

Maintain or Increase Access

If the beach closes to OHV, five cities area will suffer
 Keep dunes open
 Keep dunes open
 Keep it open
 Keep it open
 Keep it open
 Keep it open
 Keep it open for many years
 Keep ODSVRA around for many years
 Keep ODSVRA clean and open to OHV recreation
 Keep ODSVRA open for many years
 Want my grandkids to be able to experience this
 Please don't close down any of the dunes
 Please don't take away camping, driving access, or ATVs
 Please keep beach open for my kids to enjoy like I got to
 Please keep dunes open
 I want to do what I can to help keep ODSVRA open-call me if I can be of help
 Please make it bigger like it used to be
 Open more of Dunes
 Open more of dunes for use/ fences are closing in
 Open more of the riding area
 Open up some closed areas of dunes
 More land please
 Need more riding area
 Would like more riding space
 Please try to keep it open for years to come
 Important to keep riding areas like this open
 Want it to stay open
 Wish there were more riding areas
 Enlarge riding area, remove fences
 Enlarge riding area/remove fences

Enlarge riding area/remove fences
 Enlarge riding area/remove fences
 Enlarge riding area/remove fences
 Enlarge riding area/remove fences so more people can enjoy area
 Enlarge riding area/remove fences so more people can enjoy area
 Open more ATV riding area
 Needs to be more riding area open
 Open more spaces for RVs on holiday weekends
 Open more areas if it can be done without harming wildlife
 Give us back some of the riding areas
 Would like to see more area opened up
 Would pay more \$ to make sure park stays open
 Please don't close it
 Don't close the dunes
 Don't close dunes
 Don't shut it down
 Do not close the dunes please
 If dunes close it would be economic disaster for 5 cities area
 Please do not let anyone take this from us
 Closing dunes would ruin local economy
 If dunes close down it would affect the economy in the area
 Please keep the dunes open
 Would love to see it stay open
 Area should be designated for just campers
 If the beach closes to OHV, we most likely will not visit again
 Won't visit the area if dunes close
 Would be extremely disappointed if more beach area was closed
 Would not have moved to area if no Dunes
 Wish it was big like in '70s
 Wish it was the same as it was 40 years ago
 I wish it was opened up more like when I was a kid
 If they close dunes to OHVs I will not visit
 Hope access to these types of parks becomes easier to find
 Happy that Dunes are still open to OHV use
 Would be devastated if dunes close
 Would be frustrating if it closed
 It would be a big loss to shut down the beach
 Please help keep it open
 Hope I can continue to enjoy dunes
 Wish there were places to ride closer to Visalia

Complaints

Access Decrease

Riding area decreases each visit

Riding area is shrinking every year
 Too bad the dunes get smaller as years go by
 Drastic reduction in camping area & number of campers allowed; demand has increased
 Dune area that has no vegetation is fenced off -I can't see why

Crowding and Noise

Getting crowded
 Too crowded/dangerous
 More people coming and riding place getting smaller, can be more dangerous
 Less land to ride on, same amount of people visiting
 Many people get hurt when they rent because they do not know how to drive
 Dunes too crowded during high use times
 Crowded
 Too dangerous/crowded
 1000 RVs on the beach is too much
 Crowding messes up the beach
 There is a large volume of people in a small area
 Noisy
 Not everyone wants to hear a 2-stroke at 7am
 Limited in space available to explore dunes
 With more land people would not have to camp on top of each other
 Need to limit the amount of quads/motorcycles on weekends
 Need more camping area
 During the summer every weekend sells out

Staff and Service

Park personnel exceeding speed limits
 Park rangers are negative
 Ranger had very obnoxious attitude
 Very bad experience with ranger while citing for permit not displayed in window
 Most cars were speeding and rangers did not ask them to slow down
 Speed limit signs are not enforced
 Some beach patrollers were rude and cocky
 One of my biggest disappointments is ATV rentals on beach-invites inexperienced riders into area
 Quad rentals too expensive

Restrooms

I would not return because bathrooms were so disgusting
 I would not return because bathrooms were so disgusting
 Improve restrooms
 Outhouses are a health hazard
 Portapotties too far from each other

Damaged and rusted portapotties in Area 3
 Appalled by conditions of portapotties
 Bathrooms (especially outhouses) were disgusting
 Want access to more cleaner restrooms

Facility & Misc. Complaints

Found out that people actually drive on the beach-don't care for that
 Too much litter in riding area
 Last year, trash on beach was really bad
 Piles of trash on beach
 Concerned about glass and garbage on beach
 Very dirty and dangerous for kids
 Will not be using Area 3 again
 Unhappy to discover that kite flying is unprohibited
 Friday nights are dangerous b/c drunk drivers drive thru camps w/o park rangers in sight
 Got stuck twice driving to campsite
 Deceased animals are not cleaned up and smell bad and attract flies
 Local businesses exploit visitors
 Not the same without "Devil's Slide"
 If fences were down the beaches would look a lot nicer

Other Comments

Did not camp on the beach/dunes-have no interest in that
 People visit dunes to ride, not hike
 Enjoy outdoors but don't ride OHV on the beach
 Bring lunch
 Stay at dunes
 Live in Grover Beach
 Live in area
 Much more peaceful to visit during the week
 Hope people don't take advantage of its beauty
 Glam is a better place to ride
 Gas cans got stolen out of our camp
 Glad no trouble went on while I was there
 Friend crashed his race truck
 Now most people camp in trailers
 Had a blast except for rainy days
 We take out more trash than we brought in
 Not many other places to ride our OHVs
 Snowy plover has many migration areas besides ocean dunes
 Birds can fly to other beaches, humans cannot
 Let the bird people know that the birds did not stay in their fenced area
 The birds are smart and know how to stay away from moving vehicles all by themselves